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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION;
BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution was the major editorial theme of the daily newspapers on August 31, 2005.
END SUMMARY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [1A. "An Evil Ideology" \(Al-Bayyan, 8/31\)](#)
- [1B. "The Peoples' Word Will Be the Decisive Judgment" \(Baghdad, 8/31\)](#)
- [1C. "Before it's too Late" \(As-Sabah, 8/31\)](#)
- [1D. "The American Shifts" \(Al-Ittihad, 8/31\)](#)
- [1E. "Pie in the Sky?" \(Az-Zaman, 8/31\)](#)

SELECTED COMMENTARIES

[1A. "An Evil Ideology"](#)
(Al-Bayyan, affiliated with the Islamic Ad-Dawa Party led by Al-Ja'afari, published this front-page editorial)

"Without a doubt, the democratic and constitutional process in Iraq aims to establish a political regime that can represent Iraqis' willpower and guarantee their rights. The most important principles in the current constitution aim to provide constitutional and legal assurances that will prevent the reemergence of a dictatorship in Iraq. The Prime Minister Al-Ja'afari has stressed that the Ba'ath Party has no place in the new Iraq. He indicated that the new political process can include any Ba'athist who has not committed crimes against the Iraqi people. Ba'athist ideology is very dangerous and for three-and-a half decades this party adopted a violent policy that tyrannized the Iraqi people and committed massacres. At the same time, it waged wars on its neighbors and those wars led to the devastation of the country. There are some groups in Iraq trying to reestablish the Ba'ath Party under new pretexts and names. They claim that it is not necessary to single out the Ba'ath Party in the draft constitution because that will damage attempts at national reconciliation. However, we must not forget what this party did to our people and thus we have to insist on and continue eradicating it to save Iraq from its evil."

[1B. "The People's Word Will Be the Decisive Judgment"](#)
(Baghdad, affiliated with the Iraqi National Accord led by Iyad Allawi, published this back-page editorial by Abdul Karim Al-Khazraji)

"The Iraqi draft constitution was made by humans and it was written according to different viewpoints. However, these viewpoints do not necessarily represent the opinions of all Iraqis. Perhaps those who drafted that constitution represent their sects or political parties' opinions and attitudes. We must encourage political dialogue and conversation in order to make Iraq progress toward a democratic regime. The current constitution is written by humans and it can be modified in the future. It is true that this constitution does not represent the ambitions of all Iraq's people and there are many criticisms and reservations about the text. In fact, there is no consensus on this constitution. However, the Iraqi people will have their final word on referendum day. They will make their decisions without pressure or influence."

[1C. "Before it's too Late"](#)
(As-Sabah, independent, published this front-page editorial by Jum'a Al-Hilfi)

"The Ba'athist regime dealt with its opponents by fire and without any mercy even with their families. That regime didn't accomplish any victories for Iraq, Iraqis, or for the Arab nation through its suspect wars, but on the contrary it propagated many disasters. The British-American occupation in 2003 was a logical result of the Ba'athists' foolish policies. After all that, Ba'ath supporters should have been grateful to God for not being chased and buried as they did to others in the past.

Those who raised the tyrant's photo in Ba'quba and Tikrit

cannot be considered brave or ordinary men because they've stirred up resentment against millions of Iraqis. The PM Al-Ja'afari was clear two days ago in replying to those people by reminding them that there will be no return for the Ba'ath Party. Therefore, let the reasonable people of Ba'quba and Tikrit advise the ignorant to reconsider their behavior before it's too late."

D. "The American Shifts"

(Al-Ittihad, pro coalition, affiliated with the PUK led by Talabani) published this page-five editorial by Faryad Rawanduzi (Editor-in-Chief and TNA member)

"The U.S. Embassy tried to produce a constitution that hinges on moderate Islam, in an effort to isolate extremist Islam which is the enemy of the government and the people of United States. But it has not succeeded in implementing this policy in the draft constitution process because it didn't have a fixed policy vis--vis religious groups.

The U.S. Embassy was against Al-Sadr's group and Sunnis religious groups, its policy turned against Sunnis (in the Fallujah battles), then they went back to them (Saleh Al-Mutlag). Later there were Bush's warnings to the political Sunni groups while at the same time he advocated for the Kurds and Sh'ia. So, the Sunnis left the political process at the last moment when they realized that Zalmay Khalilzad might change his policy towards them.

The constant shifting that the U.S. Embassy followed with opponents of the American role in Iraq has weakened the policy itself. Religious groups believed that continued opposition toward the Americans would yield benefits and concessions from the Americans. So, American policy needed to accept those groups after the fall of Saddam. The United States needs to abandon this policy and it needs permanent and real Sunni political friends who believe in democracy, even if they opposing the U.S. And it doesn't need temporary friends who don't understand the democracy which Americans shed their blood for."

E. "Pie in the Sky?"

(Az-Zaman published this back-page editorial by Fateh Abdul Salam)

"There are so many good articles in the draft constitution that support human rights. They await the referendum but the surprising thing is that no one cares about the civil war that rages daily and violates the religious and human rights of Iraqis.

The constitution needs goodwill and hard efforts from all Iraqis to succeed. The constitution needs a balanced and organized campaign to explain all the facts and fallacies about the constitution. When the draft constitution was announced, the American ambassador said the Iraqi constitution was the most evolved constitution in the Islamic world that was much less than the truth. The truth is that there are so many articles in the draft constitution that are similar to Eden, the paradise that God promised for the worthy and good. The problem is, will the Iraqi government be able to commit to the constitution's articles and work with them? Iraqis want a realistic draft constitution that deals with the real needs of Iraqis. We do not want pie in the sky or pipe dreams."

Khalilzad